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ILLEGIB

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3 February 1960

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: NIE 11-8-59: Soviet Capabilities for Strategic Attack Through Mid-1960

1. After NIE 11-8-59 had been approved by USIB and printed, but before it was disseminated, changes were made in NIE 11-5-59 -- changes in the performance characteristics of the ICBM. It was therefore necessary to revise that part of the text of NIE 11-8 which dealt with ICBMs. The present text is that revision.

2. The essential conclusions remain the same as in the previously approved draft, though various details in the supporting argument have been altered. We have made an effort to change as little as possible of the earlier text.

3. The most serious dissent will probably come from State, which has decided that the number of Soviet ICBMs on launcher in 1961 may be as high as 300. They will probably state that a number from 200-300 is less likely than the agreed number 140-200, but is still a possibility that cannot be excluded.

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4. Apart from this I know of no serious difficultion. Indeed, several Air Force footnotes which appeared in the previous version have been withdrawn in this revision.

FOR THE BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES:

SHERMAN KENT
Chairman

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